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Episcopalians well-off, devout, moving to country, new survey shows

By GEORGE W. CORNELL
AP Religion Writer

NEW YORK — Most Episcopalians are relatively well-off, well-educated, go to church often and pray much, says a study which also finds that a lot of them are leaving the big cities.

The "Profile of Episcopalians," prepared by a state-of-the-church committee for the denomination's triennial general convention Sept. 5-15 in New Orleans, says 94 percent regard religion as important in their lives.

That is 8 points higher than the percentage attributed to the average American.

The 2.8-million-member denomination, considered a "bridge" church between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, faces several major decisions at the coming meeting, including proposed closer tie with Lutherans.

Also up for adoption is a proposed new hymnbook, the first revision of the church's hymnal since 1940. A commission of hymnologists has been working on it for several years.

Among numerous other matters, there's also a proposal to change the title of the church's presiding bishop to archbishop.

The denomination is one of 26 national churches stemming from the Church of England, all part of the worldwide Anglican Communion of about 70 million. Ever since colonial days, Episcopalians, for their numbers, have had a disproportionately large place in American leadership.

The study of the present crop was based on a sampling of 2,000 members of the faith, 964 of whom returned filled-in questionaires.

More than half, 58 percent, have been members of some other denomination, the largest proportions coming from Methodist, Roman Catholic or Baptist churches — a clue to the ecumenical criss-crossing common throughout American churches.

Nearly all Episcopalians, 99 percent, pray regularly, usually "about once a day," and more than half at meal time.

Seventy-eight percent attend worship at least twice monthly, 47 per cent each week and only 3 percent never attend. The never-attend figure has shrunk to less than half since three years ago when it was 8 percent.

Ninety-six percent of members are white, 3 percent black, 1 percent Oriental, compared with the general U.S. population, which is 83 percent white. But 68 percent of Episcopalians say they would welcome a non-white pastor.

A majority, 58 percent, competed college and 31 percent have post-graduate training, compared with 20 percent of the U.S. population who have finished college.

Nearly half the members are in the professions or business and 25 percent are retired. Only 3 percent are manual workers. Seven percent are in clerical or sales work.

Seventy-one percent of Episcopal households had income in 1981 of more than $20,000, compared with only 32 percent of U.S. households.

As for religious views, 96 percent of Episcopalians believe Jesus is both God and man or divinely inspired. Those who think the Bible should be taken "literally, word for word," has dropped from 15 to 11 percent.

Eighty percent believe the Bible is the "inspired word of God," but not everything in it is to be read literally. Both Bible literalists and those consider the Bible "a book of legends are in a distinct minority in our church," the report says.

It says participation in church activities is "very high," with the percentage involved in various kinds of church work up from 56 percent three years ago to 69 percent.

Forty-one percent want closer relations with the Roman Catholic Church and 61 percent want increased cooperation with Protestant churches. The desire for more evangelism has risen from 25 to 32 percent.

A problem area showed up in the way Episcopalians see communication between the national church offices and the people. It's "not seen as good," the report notes. Only 27 percent considered it good three years ago, and now only 19 percent do.

About 54 percent of the membership is female.

Apparently "a large number of our people have left the larger cities," the report says. The bulk, 51 percent, now live in towns of 2,500 to 50,000 people. Only 7 percent are in cities of 500,000 to 1 million.

Amigos Internacionales: They pull teeth for God

By FERRELL FOSTER
Managing Editor

Hopeful patients line up, waiting to benefit from the dentist's trained hands. But the great demand for the dentist's skills has depleted his supply of pain-deadening anesthetics — time to close up shop.

Not so, in the jungles of South America.

An old man steps forward and says pull his tooth without the drug. The dentist does as instructed and his work continues.

James E. Wren, president of Amigos Internacionales, related that story when in Marshall last week. The setting of the tale was one village in the small nation of Belize, formerly British Honduras, just south of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula.

Wren used the incident to illustrate the medical and dental needs of the people living in the secluded areas of Belize. He said the old man had been in such pain, that he was willing to have the tooth pulled without an anesthetic.

Amigos Internacionales is an interdenominational, non-profit corporation which sponsors several trips to Belize annually. Amigos groups provide medical, dental and agricultural assistance to the people of Belize, and spread the Christian message.

A group of five Marshallites have just returned from a two-week trip to Belize. The local group included Dr. George F. Stephens, Dr. W.Q. Burns, Bill Crane, Alfie Austin and Will Burns. It was Stephens' third trip and he said he does it "to help people."

From daylight until dark, the Marshall dentists pulled and fixed teeth. At night, Austin, pastor-teacher at Believers Bible Fellowship, delivered the Christian message.

Stephens said the facilities were not the most modern. His patients sat in a chair propped against an outside wall or a tree. There was no electricity, no hot water and the line of people needing care was never ending.

Dr. George Stephens, left, a local dentist, performs dental work on a man in the tiny South American nation of Belize.

The Marshall group worked out of Punta Gorda, a town of about 3,000 residents, and went to outlying villages. Stephens said a 6-mile canoe trip was required to reach one village. Their meals consisted of tortillas and various soups. Thatch-roofed huts provided shelter on some nights.

"It's not frightening, but it's different," Stephens said. Wren added that everyone ought to visit a Third World country to see how they live.

Amigos, founded in the late 1960s, sponsors about eight trips a year to Belize and Wren said they hope to expand to one a month.

Wren said Amigos was organized to involve laymen and laywomen in direct Christian missions. But he added, "Most everyone in this world has been preached to, but they have other needs. Medical and dental are two of the biggest."

Amigos has established itself in Belize through its connections with the country's government. Amigos and the Belize government signed an agreement in 1976 giving Amigos workers the same legal status as government health department workers.

Wren said that because of Amigos' track record in medical and dental work, the government asked the group to provide agricultural assistance. Amigos expects to perform the first cattle embryo transplant in Belize next year.

Why go all the way to Belize to help people?

Wren said people here don't really suffer a great deal, they receive treatment. In Belize, a dentist can be as much as five days away. Amigos takes the dentists and doctors to the people.

SECURITY IS ETERNAL ONLY FOR THOSE WHOSE FAITH IS ETERNALY FIXED ON JESUS

Those who read the record of the gospels carefully will find repeated authority from Jesus to renounce the doctrine of eternal security. In Luke 12:42-46 Christ described in another parable how a faithful servant could turn into an unfaithful one. After asking, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward whom his lord shall make ruler over his household...?" Jesus answers his own question. "...That servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing...he will make him ruler over all he hath." Then Christ explains how that servant could lose his reward, "But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Here is a perfect example by the Master Teacher as to how a faithful and wise servant can be punished with the unbelievers. Jesus was talking about a man whom He had seen faithful enough to trust with heavy responsibilities. Undoubtedly this servant represents those who carefully served the Lord as true believers. But what happened? That very faithful servant departed from the path of faithfulness and reaped eternal ruin and death. Does this not also remind us of the words of Heb. 10:38, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." The servant in the parable, who was a believer, is now punished with the unbelievers. The faithful can draw back to perdition.

SALVATION CAN BE FORFEITED

One more parable of Christ spotlights the fact that continued forgiveness is conditional for the believer. The story is found in Matt. 18:21-35, and revolves around the forgiveness of God. A certain king responded to the pleas of his servant and forgave him a large debt. That servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a small amount, and showed no mercy, throwing him in prison because he could not pay. When the king heard what had happened, he rescinded his cancellation of the large debt and had his servant thrown to the tormentors till he paid in full.

No one can deny the obvious teaching of this parable. Even though God graciously forgives those who apply for it, that forgiveness is not without conditions for the future. We can lose that forgiveness by being unmerciful to others. This is in harmony with the words of the Lord in Eze. 33:13, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it." The principle is repeated in verse 18, "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby."

The secret lies in maintaining the righteous relationship with the source of salvation. Jesus said, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. 24:13. No one will be saved finally who does not hold out against a course of deliberate sin in the power of God. Those who do not endure to the end will have their names blotted out of the book of life. Advocates of eternal security deny it could ever happen, but read the frightening possiblity for yourself in Rev. 3:5, "He that overcometh...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." The implication is clear that those who are not overcomers—who do not endure to the end—will have their names blotted out. "For we are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Heb. 3:14. "IF we endure, we shall also reign with him: IF we deny him, he also will deny us." II Tim. 2:12 (RSV) "IF we sin willfully...there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." Heb. 10:26. "IF any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." I John 2:5. "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14. "IF ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Romans 8:13.

For more information write:
SEARCHING FOR TRUTH
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adv.

Youth mission hits inner-city Houston

First Baptist Church sponsored a youth mission trip to Houston July 24 to 31st. Twenty-five youths and four sponsors traveled to the inner-city to aide the Houston Baptist Mission Center ministry to the neighborhood.

Marshall youth involved were Tanya Baker, Jennifer Jeffus, Melissa Payne, Marla Ryan, Tiffany Keith, Nickie Newton, Shelley Parrish, Terri Pace, Manuel Longoria, Jason Robbins, Trevor Rogers. High Schoolers going on the trip were: Jamie Darden, Cindy Harris, Tandra Pace, Donnis Payne, Beth Pedison, Shelley Simpson, Jennifer Taylor, Janet Bell, Doug Fritts, Doug Endicott, Don Mathews, Pat Powell, Bill Watson, and Kelon Hall.

Sponsors were David and Kim Penny. Minister of Youth is Harry Mathews. Anne Leslie Monigold served as assistant youth director.

After several weeks of preparation, the youths held a backyard Bible school for the children of the area.

In the afternoons, they painted playground equipment for the mission, and made many side trips.

Monday they visited the Galleria.

Tuesday the group watched baseball's Astros win in the Astrodome.

Wednesday, the group attended College Park Baptist Church.

Galveston Beach was the site the group visited Thursday afternoon, ending up at AstroWorld on Friday evening.

Ferrell Foster

Hand in hand
Edna Rinnels, left, and Mrs. Hebert McCarty, both of Marshall, walk hand in hand Friday evening in South Marshall. Ms. Rinnels was taken Mrs. McCarty, who has eye problems, for a leisurely stroll.

Church calendar

CENTRAL BAPTIST
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. Prayer and Bible Study group meets with Mrs. Jim Meadows, 411 Shirley.
Wednesday: 5:30 p.m. Church supper in Fellowship Hall.
7:30 p.m. Sanctuary Choir rehearsal.
Thursday: 9:30 a.m. Mother's day out.
11:30 a.m. Youth Prayer Luncheon and Bible Study in Fellowship all.
7 p.m. Visitation.
Saturday: 8 a.m. Car Wash on south parking lot.
9 a.m. Long Range Planning Committee and Church Staff meeting in Fellowship Hall.
Noon. Children in grades 1-6 leave from the church to go to Hamel's Park in Shreveport.

FIRST BAPTIST
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study Group meet in Adult 5.
7 p.m. Deacons meeting.
Wednesday: 5:30-6:15 p.m. Supper served by reservation.
6:15-7 p.m. Business meeting.
6:30-7:30 p.m. Youth Bible Study.
7-7:30 p.m. Adult lesson preview and preschool, youth and children department director's meeting in Adult 5.
7:30-8:30 p.m. Adult choir rehearsal.
Thursday: 2 p.m. J-HO meet at church.
Friday: 4 p.m. Older childrens retreat. Meet at church and leave for Pine Cove Encampment.
Saturday: 2:30 p.m. Children return from Pine Cove.
4 p.m. Adult 1's party at Shadowood Lake.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
Monday: 1:15 p.m. Staff meeting in education office.
7 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 239 meet in parking lot to go swimming.
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. Day school board meet in conference room.
10 a.m. Young-al-Heart recreation in gym.
Noon. Young-at-Heart dinner in dining room.

SOUTHERN METHODIST
Monday: 7:30 p.m. Single's ministry.
Wednesday: 7 p.m. Prayer and bible study.
Friday: 6:30-9:30 p.m. Couples out program.

TRINITY EPISCOPAL
Monday: 5:30 p.m. Steering Committee meeting.
Tuesday: 9:30 a.m. Retired Persons.
7:30 p.m. Visitation.
Wednesday: 10 a.m. Holy Communion.
3:45 p.m. Youth Choir Practice.
7 p.m. Holy Communion.
Thursday: 7 p.m. Discussion group, M.M. Davis home.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. Youth Confirmation Class Outing.

Racial tensions plague 'freedom's cradle'

By JAMES SIMON
Associated Press Writer

BOSTON — Boston, birthplace of the anti-slavery movement in the 1830s and a center of liberal politics for decades, is struggling to shake the image of a city where blacks aren't safe and racial violence spills out of even the nicest neighborhoods.

Police reported 40 assaults, 16 stonings of motor vehicles, 11 stonings of homes and 58 cases of vandalism, threats, harassment and attempted robberies — all with racial overtones — in the first seven months of 1982.

"I would certainly say our reputation is justified. It's a very racist city," said Virginia Parks, executive secretary of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

The state receives about 1,400 complaints a year alleging discrimination in Boston housing, employment, credit and public accommodations, Ms. Parks said.

Other outcroppings of racial strife include:

— Earlier this year, William Atkinson, a black, was attacked by five white youths as he left a party in a white neighborhood. Atkinson ran into a subway station and was found dead near the tracks, apparently hit by a train. The whites were charged with manslaughter.

— A week ago, members of a black family told police four white youths attacked their car with a club, chains and tire iron following a traffic argument near Boston Common. The youths have been arraigned on charges they smashed the family's car windows and injured the husband and a month-old child.

— This month, three black families filed a $1 million suit against the mayor and police commissioner after their homes in a mostly white section of Dorchester were firebombed. They charged the city has an informal policy of allowing a "conspiracy" of violence against blacks.

— Last week, nine white men went on trial under the state's Civil Rights Act, accused of harassing a black couple in Hyde Park, a mostly white, working-class neighborhood.

"I have not been able to enjoy one single, solitary day of living in my home," sobbed Bertha Brooks, a black woman. She testified she and her husband had been continually taunted since moving to the area in 1978, and that she once was pushed, punched in the mouth and kicked.

Some blacks are afraid to go to professional sporting events and have been warned to avoid some predominately white areas.

"I know of no black professionals going to Red Sox games because it's not safe, or going to Celtics games," said Ms. Parks. "It's white turf, and you just don't have access."

"You can't watch the ball game and your own back at the same time," says Joseph Feaster, president of the Boston NAACP. "You wind up just avoiding big-crowd situations."

During the national NAACP convention here last month, radio station WEEI broadcast a warning for delegates to avoid several predominately white areas of Boston, including the North End with its historic Old North Church.

People's Baptist services slated

People's Missionary Baptist Church, 2603 University Ave., will be having a Men' & Women's Day program today at 2:30 p.m.

The speaker will be M.C. McCurry.

The Rev. U. Bailey, pastor, extends an invitation to everyone.

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